



Brendan W. Case and William Glass

Least of the Apostles: Paul and His Legacies in Earliest Christianity

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Paul was not the only Christian in his time, maybe not even the most prominent one. While there are some studies on the apostle’s “fellow-workers,” the book under review is innovative as it puts Paul into a trajectory, shedding light on early Christian texts and traditions that may have influenced him, as well as on texts and traditions that, unexpectedly, may show his traces. At the same time, it is a tribute that Brendan W. Case and William Glass offer to their academic teacher at Duke University, Douglas Campbell, who, in turn, has provided a foreword to the volume. The aim of the authors is to approach the history of earliest Christianity (which is also the earliest history of Christian theology) not with the paradigm of conflicts and competition, often connected with the name of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), but with emphasis on connections within earliest Christianity.

The first part of the book, “Paul among the Apostles,” is devoted to influences on Paul, or factors that shaped his thought. After an introduction by Glass (1–10), Case attempts a novel approach to the background of Paul’s theology of justification: “James as the Origin of Pauline Justification” (13–46). In his view, the famous passage Jas 2:14–26 is not a polemical reaction to Paul’s theology but rather, provided the Epistle of James is authentic, is itself the point of reference from which Paul developed his thoughts of justification by faith. Glass then turns to Paul’s harsh condemnation of one particular case of sexual misbehavior in 1 Cor 5:1: “The Immoral Brother and the Apostolic Decree” (47–68). Glass argues that Paul’s exceptionally sharp reaction has to do with the fact that this case is a blatant violation of the apostolic decree that, according to Acts 15:20, 29, forbids *πορνεία*. The third chapter

in this part is by Case, who enters the field of possible contacts between Paul and the Jesus tradition, precisely in search of “Pauline Evidence for Markan Posteriority” (69–90). Drawing on different sorts of parallels in the Pauline epistles, Case finds Paul referring to Matthean versions of the material in questions (rather than to the Markan versions) and thus eventually reclaims Paul in support of the Griesbach theory, according to which Matthew is the oldest gospel, followed by Luke, and both eventually epitomized by Mark. However, Case refrains from drawing any chronological consequences for the composition of the gospels. The criteriological question (that is, whether the parallels between Pauline epistles and Synoptic Gospels are to be explained by literary dependence or by recourse to shared tradition or Old Testament reference) remains undiscussed.

The second part of the book, in turn, is about “the legacies of Paul.” Glass moves to the margins of a possible *Corpus Paulinum*: “Apollos and the Pauline Influence on Hebrews” (93–125). Eventually, he makes a “cumulative case” (124) for Apollos as the author of Hebrews, which is meant to explain both the apparently Alexandrian intellectuality present in the document and the Pauline connection apparent in Heb 13:23–25. Then Case again moves to the area of the gospels, looking for traces of Paul’s thoughts on the “spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:35–50) in the Gospels of Luke and John: “What Is Born of Spirit Is Spirit: Paul’s ‘Spiritual Body’ in Luke and John” (126–45). While the stress on the materiality of the risen Jesus in Luke 24 is quite at odds with what one reads in 1 Cor 15, the narratives in John 20 are more closely in line with 1 Cor 15, both in the references to Gen 2:7 (John 20:22) and in Jesus’s appearance in John 20:24–29. The question remains open, however, whether this makes for a robust case for John’s dependence on Paul, in other words, whether John really needed Paul to arrive at this specific view of the risen Jesus. The last chapter is apparently anonymous, but the reference to Case on page 170 is a giveaway for Glass as the author: “In Memoriam: The Influence of Paul and Peter on the New Testament and the Early Church” (146–82). Glass explicitly engages Ferdinand Christian Baur and his (Hegelian) view of early Christian history as (necessarily) a history of conflicts: Baur just made too much of Paul’s brief note on the Antiochene conflict (Gal 2:11–14), the only clear piece of evidence for a difficult relationship between the two apostles. Glass attempts a revision of this influential model of earliest Christian history. On the one hand, he tries to present Paul’s relationship to Peter as fairly harmonious; there is indeed more to say on this matter than Glass does in this chapter. On the other hand, he tries to establish Peter’s view on the latter’s relationship to Paul by arguing for the authenticity of the two canonical epistles of Peter, authenticity, that is, in terms of the secretary hypothesis.

It is not easy to assess this volume as a whole: It is neither a monograph nor a Festschrift but a clearly focused collection of essays by two authors who share a project and some basic decisions (such as the unwillingness to consider traditions that may have circulated outside the texts now preserved in the New Testament). The range of topics discussed in this volume is of necessity selective, but the selection is not always self-evident; there are a number of topics that one should have expected in the two parts. While Glass is certainly right to view the relationship between Paul and Peter not in terms of fierce hostility, the heading “Paul among the Apostles” would have required a word or two on the

intra-Christian polemics that one finds in most of Paul's epistles, especially since the very title of apostles is at stake more than once. Among "Paul's Legacies," it would have been good to find some statement on the question of Pauline pseudepigraphy, even if one does not believe there is pseudepigraphy in the New Testament. Of course, it is impossible even for two authors to provide a comprehensive account. As the collection stands, there are large blind spots besides very specialized and indeed thought-provoking studies. The merit of Case and Glass, however, is to have taken up the issue of Paul's relationships to other early Christian thinkers and authors of his time and shortly thereafter, Christians who are not adequately addressed as Paul's collaborators or disciples. The result is interesting: the attempt to present Paul as hub of early Christian traditions yields a decentered image of many other intellectual strands of the early Jesus movement. Readers of this volume will probably take issue with one or the other of the theses brought forward, and these do, by all means, merit further discussion.